



Mike Cole, born 1938

## Cultural History

*“Phylogeny and cultural history in ontogeny”*

As can be seen from the sub-title of this article, Mike Cole is never afraid to use long, unfamiliar words, which makes it not to be ideal for use as a reading. It is also a bit too long. But there are good reasons for including it.

One is that like Vygotsky’s article, it shows an educationalist at work who refuses any boundaries to the work of an educationalist. Not even the “Arrow of Time” is sacred for Cole. Education is involved in “Phylogenesis” (the creation of the human type, including the physical type), as well as “Ontogenesis” (the creation of the individual human life-trajectory).

Another reason for using this article is because it is an available

example of Cole's writing, with Professor Cole being a major figure in education theory, and the current principle challenger to the hegemony of the ideas of the late [Jean Piaget](#).

Another reason is to show the continuity between Engels, Vygotsky and Cole. We will in due course discover that this continuity embraces other educationists. None of these thinkers is an isolated case. There is a strong school of educational theorists with sufficient worked-out theory, based on empirical research, and tested in practice, to support a revolutionary education system in South Africa, or anywhere else on earth. Jean Piaget's utilitarian-bourgeois ideas are not the end of educational history.

Something else to look at in this essay is the comparison between Japan and the USA in motherhood behaviour, early schooling, baseball and corporate culture. All of that is in Part 5.

In particular, the preference of the Japanese for (early childhood) classes of 15 or more corresponds with the experience of the CU, where dialogue is the means of learning, and "keeping the pot boiling" is the main practice. In the CU, we relax when attendance reaches the level of 15, because at that level of attendance it is not at all difficult to sustain a discussion for the given period, and so to leave with more questions than answers, as we should.

What one might want to discuss, using this article as a common stock, could be the outer boundaries of educational theory, or lack thereof. In South Africa, the view presented for public

discussion by the bourgeois mass media is that school education is a limited thing, watched over by anxious parents and bossy teachers, that produces a narrowly-restricted result, or at best a sparse set of “outcomes”, the whole being gauged by the matriculation examinations.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Cole, Phylogeny and cultural history in ontogeny, 2007.](#)
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